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Final Report

Viet Nam: Drought and saltwater intrusion

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation	Operation n° MDRVN019
Date of Issue: 18 November 2020	Glide number: DR-2020-000017-VNM
Operation start date: 31 January 2020	Operation end date: 31 July 2020
Host National Society(ies): Viet Nam Red Cross	Operation budget: CHF 303,325
Number of people affected: 33,157	Number of people assisted: 28,400
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation: Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC), American Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross.	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: The Viet Nam Disaster Management Authority (VNDMA), UN agencies, Disaster Management Working Group, and INGOs that provided assistance to affected provinces.	

A. Situation analysis

Description of the disaster

The Mekong Delta has a total population of 19 million people, accounting for 21 per cent of the national population. The Mekong Delta is the largest center of agricultural, fishery and fruit production in Viet Nam. The region's rice production accounts for 50 per cent of the country, in which 90 per cent is for export. The region also produces more than 60 per cent of the country's seafood production. Fruit trees play an important role in the region and in Viet Nam in general. The GDP of the Mekong Delta as of June 2019 is 7.8 per cent.

The rainy season in 2019 in the Mekong was late in comparison to recent years and its duration was also short. Therefore, the total annual flow of Mekong river was lower than its annual average. The river flow to Viet Nam has rapidly decreased from the beginning of the last dry season and is now at a very low level compared to the annual average flow level of many years recorded from 1980 to the present.

Two key upstream factors that dominate water resources and saline intrusion in the dry season of 2019/2020 in the Mekong Delta are reserves in the Tonle Sap and the flow to Kratie (Mekong Delta). The flow of the Mekong Delta is seriously low, even lower than 2015 to 2016 (the year when the record drought and saline intrusion occurred). This is the main cause of the early, deep and prolonged drought and saline intrusion occurring, which affects people and production in the Mekong Delta.

According to data from the Central Steering Committee on Disaster Prevention and Control, ten out of 13 provinces including 74 out of 137 districts are affected by the drought and saline intrusion. More than 685,000 people in the Mekong Delta provinces were affected. Drought and saline intrusion have affected agricultural production, with estimated production losses of about 460,000ha and approximately 200,000 households lacking safe water for domestic uses. The conditions have resulted in a water shortage and significant damage to crops, threatening agricultural production, livelihoods, and access to safe water by local people. The situation has a high adverse impact, as these provinces are the country's main rice growing regions.



Winter-Spring crop was totally damaged by the drought in Tra Vinh province. (Photo: VNRC)

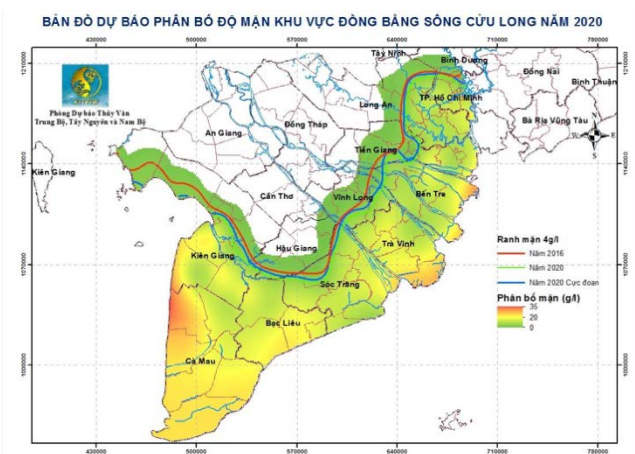


Figure 1: Saline map of Mekong delta. (Source: VNDMA)

Given the early onset of saline intrusion which is expected to intrude further inland and last for a longer time, agriculture production in some areas can be affected such as the winter to spring rice crop of 2019/2020, which is greatly affected by the irrigation water shortage, especially in coastal areas from January 2020 onwards. Summer to autumn rice crop of 2020 will also be seriously affected by saline intrusion if early rains does not come. As a result, (i) production costs increase due to the use of connection pumps (two to three levels) to take advantage of low water levels in on-farm canals to control the drought; (ii) in some areas where freshwater supply is unavailable, aquaculture production can be reduced or damaged due to high salinity levels (e.g. An Minh, An Bien in Kiên Giang province, South National Highway 1A in Bạc Liêu province, Thanh Phu, and Ba Tri in Bến Tre province); (iii) there is a possibility of freshwater shortage supply for people living in coastal areas, especially in estuary areas (e.g. Tân

Phu Dong in Tiền Giang province, Hoa Minh in Trà Vinh province, Cu Lao Dung in Sóc Trăng province, and coastal districts in Bến Tre province).

Province	Possible impact on winter-spring rice (hectares)	Est. total population affected by drought and saline intrusion (people)	Est. impact on people (persons)	
			Women	Children
Long An	1,000	52,700	27,931	12,712
Tiền Giang	28,112	86,732	39,029	17,563
Bến Tre	2,000	205,000	99,520	20,953
Trà Vinh	68,500	63,818	32,292	16,018
Sóc Trăng	49,759	86,488	40,956	19,674
Bạc Liêu	5,400	56,820	29,615	13,707
Kiên Giang	NA	80,000	34,831	16,298
Cà Mau	NA	54,000	27,300	13,432
Total		685,558	331,474	130,357

Table 1: Table of potential impact on population and livelihoods. (Source: VNDMA)

On 15-17 January, the Central Committee for Natural Disaster Prevention and Control (CCNDPC), INGOs, Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC) partners and the UN, conducted a joint multisector rapid assessment and published a joint assessment report. According to the initial findings from the joint assessment, the salt intrusion has started to cause negative impacts on the local population as the photo taken in Trà Vinh province above. There has been signs of freshwater shortages for domestic and production usages. With the coming dry season, this problem might be more significant within the region, especially with the poor households, who are suffering not only from water shortage but also from decrease of income as there has been decreasing needs for labour as a result of production interruption. The assessment also revealed that there might be risks of hygiene issues and water related diseases (especially with the poor, women and girls) as rainfall is expected to be low in the coming months. There might be a high risk of food insecurity and loss of income especially among poor and vulnerable households as the region is the country's main producers of rice. The COVID-19 outbreak is putting an additional socio-economic pressure on vulnerable households already affected by drought and saltwater intrusion. Map of the affected provinces can be accessed [here](#).

According to experts¹, the Mekong Delta region is facing abnormal weather attributed to climate change, tide changes in amplitude, propagation and discharge, subsidence resulting from over-extraction of groundwater, and upstream water retention. As of 17 March, Mekong River tidal stations of Tân Châu and Châu Đốc reported water levels fluctuating in line with their long-term averages due to the tidal effect from the sea (Mekong River Commission).

¹ Viet Nam Disaster Management Authority, Southern Institute of Water Resources Research, Raise and Fall Project – Utrecht University and Can Tho University

The ongoing drought, water shortage and saltwater intrusion are exposing a higher number of vulnerable people in the Mekong Delta region to significant water shortage risks. A total of 13 out of the 63 provinces of Viet Nam have been affected and five provinces (Kien Giang, Tien Giang, Ben Tre, Long An, Ca Mau) have declared a state of emergency (level 2). Considering seasonal forecasts, the government and partners are implementing actions to address needs and assist affected households. National and international actors are supporting households with improved water storage systems and with communication campaigns on water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH), food security, agriculture, health and nutrition, education, gender and protection. The government has identified several measures that need to be implemented on the ground and which highlight some of the existing response gaps to be addressed.



Interview with information about the damage in Ngoc Bien commune, Tra Vinh province. (Photo: VNRC)

On 3 March 2020, the UN reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with the government, VNRC, INGOs, and bilateral institutions to best respond to unmet needs of affected people, as well as supporting the government to recover, rehabilitate and build back better. As of 7 March, five provinces have declared a state of emergency. On 8 March, the Prime Minister while visiting affected areas, agreed to declare natural disaster in five provinces and announced VND 350 billion (CHF 15 million) to support relief efforts. The COVID-19 outbreak is putting an additional socio-economic pressure on vulnerable households already affected by drought and saltwater intrusion.

Moreover, the detailed needs assessment conducted by VNRC in March shows that the drought and saline intrusion phenomena have had significant impact to people's lives, especially their livelihoods. The ongoing drought, water shortage and saltwater intrusion are still exposing a higher number of vulnerable people in the Mekong Delta region to the threats listed below:

Impact on safe water for domestic uses:

An estimated 57,000 families (205,000 people) have been suffering from safe water shortage for their daily use in Ben Tre province. In two selected districts of Tra Vinh province, 5,780 families still lack safe water for their daily use. In four selected communes of Bac Lieu province, 100 per cent of poor and near poor families are reported to lack safe water. In all selected communes in the three selected provinces, 30 per cent of the population, including poor and near poor families, does not have enough water storage tanks for their daily use. Plus, people usually have to buy fresh water from sellers who collect inland water 100km from the river mouth, and water transport is very expensive (around USD 5 per cubic meter).

Damages on livelihood:

In all visited communes in Ben Tre, Tra Vinh and Bac Lieu provinces, 100 per cent of winter to spring rice crops were reported lost. Specifically, in Tra Vinh province, 3,112 hectares (ha) of rice crops were reportedly damaged in mid-February 2020, and an additional 8,803ha of rice crops reportedly reduced yield by mid-March 2020. In addition, the other fruit crops such as durian, mangosteen, mango, coconut, etc. were badly damaged due to the lack of irrigated water. This impact on livelihood is still affecting almost 700,000 people in the Mekong Delta, and it will take time for them to get back on their feet (cf. table 1 above).

Impact on health:

Cases of cholera and skin-related diseases were reported by communal health centers in the visited communes. Health officers raised concerns about people's health practices and behaviors that could cause more health problems because of the lack of safe water (e.g. people have to use saline water for bath and hand washing). In addition, COVID-19 risk also demands dissemination of more safe water and sanitation practices among community members. The progress of activities - including operating water purifiers, organizing communication events on clean water and sanitation, were affected due to COVID-19 pandemic. These events were organized with limited number of participants or not organized at all, at the request of local authorities in order to follow government guidelines for social distancing.

The situation was expected to improve in the rainy season. The rainy season started from mid-June 2020, which was later than it was last year, and on average for many years. Meanwhile, the total flow of the Mekong River to the Mekong Delta from March to the end of dry season in 2020 was 15-20% - lower than the average for many years and at the same level as in 2016. To cope with this situation, the government identified several measures to be implemented on the ground, such as the mobilization of trucks and boats to carry fresh water, drought resistant crops

as well as dyke construction to prevent saltwater from entering rice fields and fruit crops, and that highlight some of the existing response gaps to be addressed.

Despite the operating and activity budget plan were agreed between the Red Cross at all levels, many activities had to be temporarily halted due to the restrictions imposed to control the spread of COVID-19 and the Government's social distancing policy. Hence, an extension was sought until 31 July to complete implementation of the delayed activities.

Summary of Response

Overview of Host National Society

Close coordination between VNRC and its government counterparts is assured through the National Society's presence in the National Steering Committee on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control. VNRC participated in the UN led coordination meeting which took place in Hanoi on 13 January 2020 where it was attended by UN agencies, INGOs, and governmental agencies. In the meantime, VNRC also shared some updates on actions taken by the local chapters, such as a needs assessment conducted by its Provincial Disaster Response Team (PDRT) in eight provinces. In addition, VNRC has deployed its PDRT members to join the joint assessment which was led by UNDP in Ben Tre and Ca Mau from 15 to 16 January 2020.



VNRC Ben Tre Chapter distributes jerry cans to the most affected households. (Photo: Tran Pha VNRC)

VNRC has been closely monitoring the drought and saline intrusion with local counterparts. At the local level, the National Society has been coordinating with local authorities and partners including private sector to provide household well-digging assistance (a group of two to three households per well) and this is also part of VNRC campaign on "Month of Humanitarian Actions".

Under this reporting period, VNRC has conducted the following interventions in 12 targeted communes in Ben Tre, Bac Lieu and Tra Vinh provinces:

- Distributed 12,000 jerry cans to 6,000 households (23,106 people including 10,279 females)
- Deployed 12 units of brackish-water filtration machines for river water with salinity of below 8g/l

In total, 303,206 litres of safe drinking water were provided to people in need from 12 selected communes in Ben Tre, Bac Lieu and Tra Vinh provinces. 6,644 households in 12 communes collected safe water from 12 units of brackish-water filtration machines between 8 March and 2 April 2020.

In addition, detailed needs assessments have been conducted in three provinces from 11 to 20 March to inform VNRC of the needs and possible interventions. The assessments were conducted by VNRC's NDRT and PDRT members in these three provinces. The assessments suggested that many households in these three provinces desperately need water for daily consumption (i.e. at least 57,000 households in Ben Tre, 80,000 households in Tra Vinh and 68,000 households in Bac Lieu) as well as fresh water for cultivating their fruit crops (durian, mangosteen, coconut). Livelihoods were severely impacted due to saline intrusion leading to the lack of water to cultivate crops. Many households reported that the drought this year seemed to be the worst in the past many decades, especially for those households with no alternative livelihood options except for a single source of income such as fruit crops. According to the assessments, the situation would only improve when the rainy season starts (around June or July 2020). Several households were forced to buy fresh water from small delivery tanker trucks that charged high prices due to the transportation cost and distance.

VNRC with support from a local subsidiary of Mitsubishi Motors's, provided 102 water tanks of 1,500 litres capacity to 102 households (387 people including 182 women) in Ben Tre, Tien Giang and Soc Trang provinces (not covered by this DREF allocation).

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The IFRC's Country Cluster Support Team (CCST) Bangkok convened a meeting with VNRC's technical departments and Partner National Societies (PNSs) (American Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross) in Hanoi on 15 January 2020 to discuss about the potential interventions after the call for support from the government of Viet Nam. In the meantime, CCST Bangkok has been coordinating and working closely with VNRC, providing support to the National Society for updating the information and monitoring the situation.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

Since September 2019, the Prime Minister of Viet Nam has chaired the conference to discuss on the situation and finding-out the solutions to cope with the drought and saline intrusion in the Mekong Delta. In that connection, in October 2019, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development (MARD) held a regional conference to change production for the drought and saline intrusion season 2019/2020. It was requested that all localities have specific plans to respond.

The National Center for Hydrometeorological Forecasting has been regularly providing forecasts and warnings on the situation. VNRC is a member of the UN Humanitarian Country Team and on the Disaster Management Working Group as well as convening the inter-agency Shelter Cluster and Cash Working Group. VNRC has been informally sharing information with these groups as requested. In addition to that, VNRC has close relationships with members of the local corporate sector, who help in providing some in-kind assistance including freshwater bottles and food items.

In December 2019, the Deputy Chairman of Central Steering Committee for Natural Disaster Prevention and Control (CCNDPC) and the Minister of MARD appealed UN agencies, members of the National Partnership for Disaster Risk Reduction, NGOs and all to extend the support to the Mekong Delta provinces in the face of drought and saline intrusion. UN agencies, VNRC and INGOs are supporting and coordinating with the government and VNDMA to monitor impact and respond to identified gaps, including the following activities:

- UNDP (USD 185,000 equivalent to CHF 182,000) is supporting the government with field assessments, information sharing, coordination and planning events, recovery and long-term resilience building planning, and livelihood support.
- UNICEF (USD 200,000 equivalent to CHF 198,000) is supporting WASH activities (providing 1000 L water tanks, soap, hand sanitizers and water filters) and communication campaigns on WASH, health and nutrition, education, and child protection in Ben Tre and Soc Trang.
- UN WOMEN and FAO (VND 600 million equivalent to CHF 25,500) are supporting community awareness raising and technical assistance in Ca Mau.
- Save the Children (USD 110,000 equivalent to CHF 108,900) is supporting with household water storage utilities and WASH in schools and communities in Ca Mau.
- East Meets West (USD 40,000 equivalent to CHF 39,600) is supporting affected communities with WASH activities in Ben Tre.

Needs analysis and scenario planning

Needs analysis

The 2019 rainy season in the Mekong basin appeared much later than in average years, resulting in drought conditions and historic low levels of flow, raising concerns for elevated drought and saltwater intrusion for the entire Mekong Delta in the 2019/2020 dry season. Saltwater intrusion has appeared earlier in the year than the historic 2015/2016 low levels of flow. To date, saltwater intrusion of 4g/l has entered up to 110km inland (Vam Co Dong, Vam Co Tay), more than 30km beyond the highest long-term average levels (VDMA, Meteorological Department, MARD).

During the field assessment, the VNRC team has had coordination meetings with local authorities to gather information to inform the local needs as well as other stakeholders' ongoing response to propose that VNRC will continue to support less than 10 per cent of people in need, but focus on assisting only the selected poor and near poor households in six communes of Ben Tre province, six communes of Tra Vinh province, four communes of Bac Lieu province, two communes of Ca Mau province and two communes of Kien Giang province. It is noted that the two provinces of Ca Mau and Kien Giang were not targeted under the first DREF allocation but with the support of American Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross, VNRC has also managed to conduct a needs assessment in these two provinces and it is suggested that these provinces should be added in VNRC's plan of action under this second DREF allocation since they are both severely affected. VNRC and its chapter informed and coordinated with government of Viet Nam and other actors to avoid overlaps and maximize response operation in these provinces.



Poor households have only one small water tank which cannot store enough fresh water. (Photo: VNRC)

Province	Number of affected HHs in selected communes	Number of affected poor HHs	Number of affected near poor HHs	Number of HHs need safe water	Number of HHs need water tanks	Number of HHs need early livelihood recovery
Ben Tre	17,844	1,495	1,116	8,235	821	674
Tra Vinh	15,824	1,050	1,885	680	825	640
Bac Lieu	11,867	195	729	285	265	455
Ca Mau	7,342	328	112	440	440	440
Kien Giang	7,074	272	965	462	462	0
Total	59,951	3,340	4,807	10,102	2,813	2,209

Table 2: Needs reported in selected communes of five provinces for VNRC response. (HH: household)

The VNRC's needs assessment found that while the need for clean water for daily use was a priority in three provinces Ben Tre, Tra Vinh, and Bac Lieu, livelihoods support was required in five provinces that included Kien Giang and Ca Mau in addition to the three mentioned earlier.

Beneficiary selection

The VNRC ensured thorough coordination with partners and local authorities on the ground to avoid any potential duplication and optimized the use of Red Cross staff and volunteers at all levels.

During its damage and needs assessment, the VNRC team discussed with community representatives, local authorities and other stakeholders to define criteria for beneficiary selection as below:

- Poor and near poor households that lack safe water and have to buy water
- Poor and near poor households that had livelihoods affected by drought and saline intrusion
- Poor and near poor households that lost job/work because of drought and saline intrusion

Priority was given to the households that had elderly people, or children under five years old, or pregnant women, or people with disability, or had no one in the work force.

Scenario planning

The drought and saline intrusion continued in May and June 2020. Sea water of 4g/l intruded inland from 40km to 125km in the Mekong river system. That continued to create lack of safe water for people and their livelihoods. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD's) daily report still announce the drought and saline intrusion at danger levels 1 and 2 and advised local communities and authorities to check salinity rate before using river waters. The affected communities were advised to wait until June 2020 to commence summer rice planting, so that the monsoon rains would wash away the salinity.

Risk Analysis

Over half a million of people were expected to be directly affected by the disaster in all 13 provinces of the Mekong Delta. Drought and COVID-19 created a double crisis in the Mekong Delta Region, as COVID-19 increased the need for water for handwashing and hygiene. Therefore, VNRC established a coordinated approach with partners on the ground, including the local authorities and civil society organizations (CSOs). In addition, VNRC headquarters provided close monitoring and technical support to the provincial chapters and at the same time worked closely with the local government in the beneficiary selection process to ensure the process was accountable and transparent for the affected communities. Physical distancing and in-country travel restrictions related to COVID-19 have been relaxed, enabling VNRC to resume this operation in full swing from May 2020 onwards.

B. Operational strategy

Overall Operational objective

This DREF operation aims at implementing relief and early recovery actions to help affected people through the provision of safe water, and hygiene/health promotion interventions to 24,000 people and early recovery livelihoods support to 4,400 people in the five worst affected provinces of Ben Tre, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, Kien Giang and Tra Vinh in Mekong Delta within six months.

Proposed strategy

The DREF operation targeted the five worst affected provinces in the Mekong Delta namely Bac Lieu, Ben Tre, Ca Mau, Kien Giang and Tra Vinh. The selection of the provinces was based on needs assessments, resources available and the support from the government of Viet Nam and humanitarian actors. This action augments and does not duplicate continuing assessment done by other donors and agencies. This action contributes to the national effort in combating COVID-19 where the government has been emphasizing on social welfare support to those who lost income and jobs due to the COVID-19.

Therefore, the assistance provided to these affected provinces ensures the needs of the most vulnerable people are consulted, validated and met, including access to clean water for consumption, domestic use and support for hygiene promotion and communication leading to the reduction of health risks. The local authorities and Red Cross personnel have sufficient abilities in early response to assist the local population.

VNRC branches have deployed teams of WASH specialists and technicians, who are assisting the selected communities with the operations and maintenance of the water treatment units. In this connection, VNRC provided trainings to Red Cross volunteers in the communities, so that they could manage some of the operations and maintenance and not be fully dependent on outside technical specialists.

The interventions focused on:

- Deployment of pre-positioned water filtration units to provide safe water to vulnerable people in selected communes, which can help community people to quickly meet needs for some period of time in May, June and July.
- Provision of cash grants to 1,100 poor and near poor families for early livelihoods recovery.
- Provision and organization of training on WASH communication and dissemination in three provinces (on WASH knowledge and skills, and know-how in responding to the current situation of drought and saline intrusion).
- Improvement of WASH services through hygiene and health promotion (including vector control) for the households, including promotion of handwashing. Conducting sanitation and hygiene promotion in the communities with the participation of local families.

Through this operation, VNRC's capacity especially WASH teams in these provinces have more volunteers trained to operate the machines in the longer-term, especially if they face a similar emergency. VNRC shall also be able to mobilize contribution from domestic donors toward the running cost of these units.

VNRC has a proactive approach to community engagement and accountability. Affected communities including women and members of vulnerable group such as ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and the elderly, are engaged in the process of selecting people who would receive assistance and are informed about the selection criteria. Communities are also engaged in verifying information regarding beneficiary households to ensure that the most vulnerable are reached. The National Society activated its beneficiary feedback mechanisms during the selection and distribution processes at the community level.

Phone hotlines of VNRC Operation Manager and local chapter officer in charge of the operation were established, and focal points not directly involved in the operation were designated at both the headquarters and chapter levels, as well as within local authorities to receive beneficiary feedback. In addition, beneficiary feedback boxes were made available at beneficiary selection processes and distribution sites to allow anonymous feedback. Following the distribution process, post-distribution monitoring (PDM) was undertaken to assess the level of satisfaction from beneficiaries regarding the nature of the response as well as different aspects of the distribution process, such as the timeliness of the support and suitability of the distribution process.

Reporting on the operation was carried out in accordance with the IFRC reporting standards. Regular updates were issued during the operation's timeframe with a final report issued within three months after the end of the operation. The operation received support through IFRC CCST PMER and Communications Officer. The operation monitoring teams made field visits as needed. This helped to identify, and where possible and necessary, resolve any issues. Necessary tools and templates for regular data collection and reporting were adopted from existing PMER resources. In addition, a PDM was organized prior to a lesson learned workshop at the end of the operation to inform the VNRC and IFRC of the operation's successes and areas of improvement.

VNRC is bound to follow the procurement laws of the government and has an established procurement committee structure which includes both the national and provincial level and appoints focal points to oversee the process and to ensure that it meets requirements. Several VNRC staff have been trained in the government's procurement regulations. IFRC Operational Logistics Procurement and Supply Chain Management (OLPSCM) provided additional technical logistics/procurement support to IFRC CCST in Bangkok and VNRC as and when needed.

IFRC CCST Finance and Administration units provided the necessary operational support for review, validation of budgets, bank transfers, and technical assistance to VNRC on procedures for justification of expenditures, including the review and validation of invoices. VNRC had implemented DREFs previously and has complied with the necessary financial procedures to the required standards.

C. Detailed operational plan



Livelihoods and basic needs

People reached: 3,843

Male: 1,920

Female: 1,923

Outcome 1: Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods

Indicator:	Target	Actual
# of targeted households that have enough cash to meet their survival threshold and/or buy some agricultural inputs for next crop	1,100	1,076

Output 1.2: Basic needs assistance for livelihoods security including food is provided to the most affected communities

Indicator:	Target	Actual
# of households reached with cash for basic needs	1,100	1,076

Narrative description of achievements

As referred to in the needs analysis, targeting, scenario planning and risk assessment above as well as according to the VNDMA report, 1.75 million people have lost livelihoods or have reduced income as a result of saltwater intrusion into their rice, other crop fields and aquaculture. VNRC supported the poorest households who lost their livelihoods and income in five selected provinces to buy agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and seeds for the next cropping season beginning in June 2020.

VNRC targeted 1,100 households (4,400 people) whose livelihoods are directly affected by the drought and saline intrusion and categorized as poor or near poor as per national standards to be assisted through this plan of action. VNRC has involved financial service provider (FSP) to assist with the disbursement of the cash to the affected people. FSPs are Viet Nam Post, Viettel, Dong A Bank and Agri bank. At the distribution points, visibility of VNRC and IFRC are highly seen and supported and monitored by the VNRC staff and volunteers.

VNRC coordinated with its local chapters to conduct need assessments in 12 communities. Four evaluators assessed the damage to access to clean water, sanitation; local livelihoods and other damages. Based on their findings and reports from the affected, VNRC decided to provide cash-based interventions for livelihood recovery.

A total of 1,076 households with 3,843 people (1,920 males and 1,923 females) were assisted, reaching 97.8% of target beneficiaries. The slight decrease in term of number of households assisted from 1,100 to 1,076 households is due to the fact that the number of households eligible for level 2 and level 3² were higher than what was planned initially.

A rapid assessment of markets in affected provinces conducted by the local Red Cross chapters found that markets were functional and there was no indication of price surge. Hence, VNRC went ahead with its unconditional cash grant support for the affected population.

Orientations regarding the operation, its objectives, the process of selecting people for assistance and its disbursement were carried out in five provinces from 23 to 26 June 2020. The participants included representatives from communities, local organizations, women's union, and heads of hamlets were communicated.

Posters on the selection process and criteria were displayed in the selected communities.

A total of 57 village meetings took place in 12 communities of five provinces, with the participation of 3,787 people (1,754 males and 2,033 females). The people to be assisted were selected after these meetings. Every village meeting had about 65- 130 participants and they included the community members, local authorities and Red Cross

² (The amount of money is allocated at three different levels:

- Level 1 with VND 1 million (CHF 42), for one-person household
- Level 2 with VND 2 million (CHF 84), for two to three-persons household
- Level 3 with VND 3 million (CHF 128), for more than three persons household)

staff members and volunteers. At the village meeting, the Red Cross staff and head of the village shared the details of selection criteria and facilitated the discussion and voting for selection of people to be assisted.



A village meeting in Hiep Thanh, Bac Lieu City, Bac Lieu. (Photo: VNRC)



A village meeting in Long Son communes, Cau Ngang, Tra Vinh. (Photo: VNRC)

The list of proposed recipients was placed publicly at distribution points or the office of the local authorities. The criteria for selection of people to be assisted included criteria to ensure inclusion of women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and the elderly and this information was provided publicly. The local people were informed of their entitlements in terms of the emergency relief assistance in cash grant and this information was widely disseminated in the local languages at the emergency relief distribution points.

Post Distribution Monitoring:

Cash transfer for livelihood restoration was implemented from 23 to 28 July 2020. A survey by VNRC in Bac Lieu has shown that beneficiaries were satisfied with the VNRC funding and cash used for the purchase of seeds, water, and other expenses during drought or saline intrusion.



Cao Thanh Chien (left) and Tran Van Truc (right) at Hiep Thanh, Bac Lieu were satisfied with the cash received from the operation. (Photo: VNRC)



Challenges

Although some provinces have implemented unconditional cash transfer program for people affected by floods in 2011, drought and saline intrusion in 2016, there are difficulties in choosing beneficiary households as the same time; because of the restrictions arising from COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, this is the first time that cash was provided to beneficiaries through financial service providers. The visibility requirements of VNRC and IFRC should be clearly communicated with the FSPs before and during the cash distribution to make sure that there is no confusion among beneficiaries when they received cash from FSPs.

Lessons Learned

It is necessary to have close coordination between the departments to quickly implement the project, branches and local authorities at all levels; financial service providers should keep reporting on progress, record of transactions and commitment in visibility plan. These should be annexed to the MoU between VNRC and FSPs.

**Health**

People reached: 7,232

Male: 4,022

Female: 3,210

Outcome 1: The immediate risks to the health of affected populations are reduced.

Indicator:	Target	Actual
# of targeted people that have access to health education sessions	3,600	7,232

Output 1.3: Community based disease prevention and health promotion is provided to the target population

Indicator:	Target	Actual
# of people reached by disease prevention and control	3,600	7,232

Narrative description of achievements

VNRC headquarters in coordination with three provincial Red Cross chapters organized four training courses (two courses in Tra Vinh on 28 February to 1 March 2020, one course in Ben Tre on 27 to 28 February 2020, one course in Bac Lieu on 29 February to 1 March 2020). The total number of participants who are staff from provinces and districts, and volunteers from 12 communes are 118 people (31 females).

The training focused on methods and skills of behavior change communication, communication skills for group work, guidelines to prevent diseases, protection, gender and inclusion (PGI), and instructions for using leaflets and posters for communication.

After the trainings, the VNRC staff and volunteers conducted behaviour change communication sessions on topics of sanitation and water and infectious diseases; and held awareness events about clean water, sanitation and water-related infectious diseases. As a result, 7, 232 people have been reached with messages on disease prevention and control and health education sessions. The number of people reached was nearly double of the target due to the active mobilization of community members by volunteers and local authorities through physical invitations and social media messages.

A set of communication materials on diseases and WASH designed and developed by the Healthcare Department and Communication and Volunteer Department in consultation with Project Steering Committee have been produced. These materials comprised A4 sized leaflets on hand washing (1,500 copies), A2 sized posters (300 copies), 0.5m wide x 3m long horizontal banners (30 copies), 0.5m wide x 3m long vertical banners (50 copies) and A4 sized epidemic PC leaflets (18,000 copies). The total number of leaflets printed and distributed is 28,369 copies.

Community outreach sessions have been suspended due to COVID-19 and the nationwide physical distancing regulation effective from 1 April to 23 April. These interventions were resumed in May when the physical distancing was less intensive



A training on Epidemic Control for Volunteers conducted in Bến Tre. (Photo: VNRC)



Health education and hygiene promotion sessions and campaigns were carried out in Bac Lieu city, Bac Lieu. (Photo: VNRC)

Challenges

The time available for implementation - from training for volunteers to direct intervention in communes, wards / residential groups, villages or residential areas was very short, requiring volunteers to be focused, being proactive and having experience in organizing activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic also affected the number of participants as the local government's regulation limited the number of people at public gatherings to less than 20 people. Hence the team relied more on outreach through social media channels such as Facebook, Zalo, email etc.

Lessons Learned

It is suggested that routine capacity building and refresher training to local RC staff and volunteers should be organized annually to ensure that they are updated with methodologies and knowledge on epidemic prevention and control. In the meantime, information on trained volunteers such as contact details should be in place and shared through social networks of Zalo; Facebook; and Email groups etc.

Due to the climate change, drought, and saltwater intrusion, it is necessary to develop suitable information for areas affected by drought and saltwater intrusion and continue to improve knowledge and skills for volunteers.



Water, sanitation and hygiene

People reached: 26,176

Male: 13,088

Female: 13,088

Outcome 1: Immediate reduction in risk of waterborne and water related diseases in targeted communities.

Indicator:	Target	Actual
# of targeted households that have access to fresh water	6,000	6,644
Output 1.2: Daily access to safe water which meets Sphere and WHO standards in terms of quantity and quality is provided to target population		
Indicator:	Target	Actual
# of people provided with safe water	24,000	26,176
Output 1.4: Hygiene promotion activities which meet Sphere standards in terms of the identification and use of hygiene items provided to target population		
Indicator:	Target	Actual
# of households reached by hygiene promotion sessions	6,000	7,232

Narrative description of achievements

The provincial Red Cross chapters conducted inspections of equipment, coordinated with equipment supplier, Viet Thai Sinh Company to provide refresher training for staff and volunteers to operate the water purification units. The key topics covered included methods to operate the equipment, conducting periodic examinations of the equipment

and its maintenance. As a result, these units were operated in three provinces:

- Ben Tre province from 7 March to 31 March 2020 producing 185,606 litres of water
- Bac Lieu province from 18 March to 1 April 2020 producing 57,000 litres of water
- Tra Vinh province from 18 March to 1 April 2020 producing 60,600 litres of water



Distribution of jerry cans to the most affected people in Tra Vinh province. **(Photo: VNRC Tra Vinh branch)**



Water distribution in Mo Cay Nam, Ben Tre province. **(Photo: VNRC Tra Vinh branch)**

In total, 12 water purification units have provided 303,206 litres of safe water to 6,644 households (26,176 people) in the 12 worst affected communes of these 3 provinces. The provincial Red Cross chapters also purchased additional accessories to ensure continuous operation of the deployed water purification units such as plastic settling tanks, pumps, plastic pipes, filter cores, electrical appliances, etc.

At least 6,000 households (23,106 people) in these communities also received 2 jerry cans per household to enable them to collect and store water for daily consumption. Each jerry has a capacity of 20 litres and they were procured locally following the IFRC procurement procedures.

Focused on the knowledge and skills gained from the refresher trainings, Red Cross staff and volunteers conducted hygiene promotion sessions for 7,232 people (3,210 females) by organizing 24 hygiene promotion sessions from 23 March to 2 April 2020. IEC materials including around 28,000 posters and leaflets depicting good personal hygiene practices (Handwashing frequently, using soap) and disease prevention (drinking boiled water, washing hands with soap after using the toilet etc) were distributed at these sessions.



Two of the posters and leaflets on good personal hygiene and disease prevention that were used in the Hygiene promotion sessions. **(Photo: VNRC)**



Some sessions were delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions:

- Ben Tre chapter completed 21 events in selected communes from 23 to 29 March.
- Bac Lieu chapter only organized 3 events out of 21 planned events during the period from 28 March to 2

April. The remaining events were carried out in May to July.

- In Tra Vinh province, 21 hygiene promotion sessions were held in June, immediately after social distancing norms were relaxed by the government.

The hygiene promotion events were held to engage the participation of local people through active discussions and to raise their awareness about hygiene, particularly on handwashing and prevention of diseases. Red Cross volunteers demonstrated ability in carrying out such events and can be mobilized for responses in future local emergency situations.

Challenges

The water purifier was difficult to operate because it has not been in use for 3 to 4 years. The social distancing policy at the end of March 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic affected people's travel to water stations. On the other hand, due to early rains in Cuu Long River Delta (May 2020), the operation of the water purifier in phase II needed to be stopped.

Lessons Learned

Every year, the local chapters needs to regularly maintain and operate water purifiers to improve efficiency in operating water purifiers. To ensure operation of the water purifiers, it is necessary to conduct the following:

- Have an operation and maintenance schedule – make it a point to check the system for e.g. every six months.
- Regularly provide refresher orientation and trainings to volunteers on the operation.
- Identify local shops where spare parts can be bought.
- Ensure there are sufficient spare parts available – this is to ensure continuous operation of the machines while being deployed.
- Identify local repairmen to handle small repairs



Protection, Gender and Inclusion

People reached: 24,000

Male: 12,000

Female: 12,000

Outcome 1: Communities identify the needs of the most vulnerable and particularly disadvantaged and marginalised groups, as a result of inequality, discrimination and other non-respect of their human rights and address their distinct needs

Indicator:	Target	Actual
Does the operation demonstrate evidence of addressing the specific needs to ensure equitable access to disaster response services?	Yes	Yes

Output 1.1: NS programmes improve equitable access to basic services, considering different needs based on gender and other diversity factors.

Indicator:	Target	Actual
RDRT (PGI) delivers orientation to Red Cross Chapters.	Yes	Yes

Output 1.2: Emergency response operations prevent and respond to sexual- and gender-based violence and all forms of violence against children

Indicator:	Target	Actual
# of staff/volunteers attending sessions on PGI (including SGBV)	120	118

Narrative description of achievements

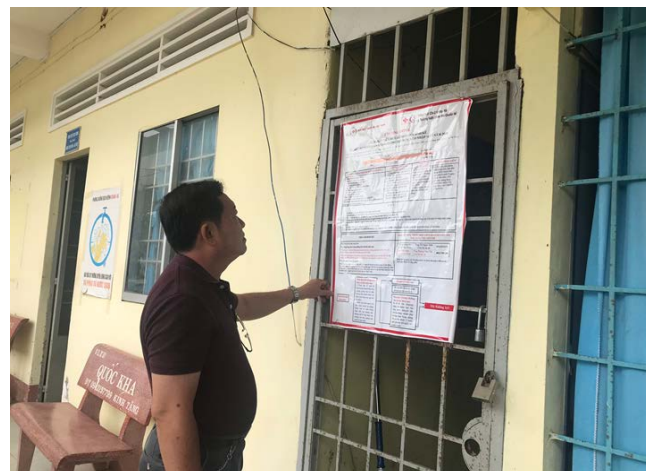
The CCST PGI Focal point has communicated with VNRC's Officer in Charge of the operation regarding inclusion of PGI in the assessment and recipient selection process. Minimum standards for PGI in emergencies were shared along with SGBV presentation with definitions in Vietnamese. These materials were used for the trainings in three provinces from 27- 28 February 2020 and it is also suggested that a PGI session be included in the ECV training as well. In addition, the DREF operational team gathered in Hanoi office to go through the materials and get acquainted with definitions, concepts and requirements. As a result, at least 118 people (87 males and 31 females) were oriented on PGI during the training on selection of target recipients which took place in three provinces from 11- 12 September 2019. The orientation session highlighted vulnerable factors and threats among women, children (both

girls and boys) and they are in the prioritized list, in line with VNRC guidelines on beneficiary selection and targeting across all sectoral interventions.

The posters displaying selection criteria clearly referred to the selection criteria prioritizing vulnerable people such as women with small children, pregnant women, PWDs and elderly. As mentioned earlier, trainings were carried out in all three provinces from 23 to 25 June 2020. There were 191 participants (152 males and 39 females) including Red Cross staff at provincial, district and community levels, representatives from local authorities, women's union, and heads of hamlets.



Posters on the beneficiary selection process in Khanh Binh Dong, Tran Van Thoi, Ca Mau. (Photo: VNRC)



Beneficiaries selection in An Biên district, Kiên Giang province. (Photo: VNRC)

Challenges

No significant challenge has been reported during the operation as the operation received adequate information and materials from the VNRC PGI focal point as well as IFRC PGI Senior Officer.

Lessons Learned

It is suggested that PGI materials should be available in Vietnamese including a standard training module and staff are trained to run it so that programme staff could be able to run the session without having a separate PGI staff to run a short session during the beneficiary selection training for instance.

Strengthen National Society

Outcome S1.1: National Society capacity building and organizational development objectives are facilitated to ensure that National Societies have the necessary legal, ethical and financial foundations, systems and structures, competences and capacities to plan and perform

Indicator:	Target	Actual
National Society chapter capacities have been strengthened through the response operation	Yes	Yes

Output 1.1.4: National Societies have effective and motivated volunteers who are protected

Indicator:	Target	Actual
# of volunteers attending briefings and trainings prior the water distributions	50	60

Narrative description of achievements

At least 60 volunteers (23 females) have been trained in operating the water purification units in these three provinces with 20 volunteers in each province. The mobilization of volunteers to be part of the operation has been helpful as the volunteers are from the areas where the water units are operated, and they know all the people in their communities. The volunteers have also provided instructions to the people on hygiene promotion and practice.

Challenges

The majority of volunteers operating water purification machines faced difficulties as the water pipes and faucets had been rusted/ oxidised due to long period of lying un-used.

Lessons Learned
Annually, it is necessary to practice and operate water purification machines, as well as checking related supplies. It is suggested that regularly refresher trainings should be held for staff and volunteers on operating the water purification units, in particular before the monsoon season. This will ensure that they have up to date knowledge and can cascade this information further to more staff and volunteers involved in operating the water purification units as well as those involved in sanitation and hygiene promotion.

International Disaster Response		
Outcome S2.1: Effective and coordinated international disaster response is ensured		
Indicator:	Target	Actual
National Society cooperates closely with local authorities on response efforts.	Yes	Yes
Output 2.1.1: Effective response preparedness and NS surge capacity mechanism is maintained.		
Indicator:	Target	Actual
# of RDRTs deployed	1	0
Output 2.1.3: NS compliance with Principles and Rules for Humanitarian Assistance is improved		
Indicator:	Target	Actual
Percentage of calls/contacts addressed through beneficiary feedback mechanism	100%	100%
Narrative description of achievements		
<p>VNRC has coordinated closely with the local authorities before and during this operation especially in terms of identification of the most affected areas to operate and the selection of beneficiaries for jerry cans as well as beneficiaries for water distribution. In the meantime, there has been thorough coordination and cooperation from the local authorities in needs assessment and security for the VNRC water team to operate the water purification units.</p> <p>No RDRT has been deployed under this operation but the CCST CSR Manager has worked closely with the VNRC assessment team to prepare for the assessment tool and assessment report. He also planned to join the assessment,</p> <p>However, the mission was cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation and travel restrictions across the border. It was expected that the CCST would be able to conduct a field visit with an aim to better understand the situation and collect beneficiary satisfaction feedback on the operation when the international travel restriction is lifted. However, this did not happen during the project life cycle.</p> <p>During the implementation of the project activities, IFRC discussed with the VNRC Project Management Board to reach agreement on plan, progress of the activities at the VNRC headquarters and the coordination with localities to operate water purification systems, select beneficiaries and distribute cash for livelihood recovery.</p>		
Challenges		
Due to the movement restriction because of the COVID-19 pandemic, IFRC was only able to provide remote support through phone calls and email to carry out activities.		
Lessons Learned		
Vietnam Red Cross will be more proactive in implementing activities, including evaluating the effectiveness of water supply and cash transfer activities to restore livelihoods through phone calls and emails etc. to comply with COVID-19 regulations.		

Influence others as leading strategic partner		
Outcome 3.1: The IFRC secretariat, together with National Societies uses their unique position to influence decisions at local, national and international levels that affect the most vulnerable.		
Indicator:	Target	Actual
Communications in APRO supports communications on the operation and the response work of the National Society	Yes	Yes
Output 3.1.1: IFRC and NS are visible, trusted and effective advocates on humanitarian issues.		
Indicator:	Target	Actual
# of communications products made	2	0
Output 3.1.2: IFRC produces high-quality research and evaluation that informs advocacy, resource mobilization and programming		
Indicator:	Target	Actual
Post-distribution monitoring undertaken in 5 provinces.	Yes	Yes
Narrative description of achievements		
<p>News and progress of the operation has been published on the IFRC CCST Resilience Library. Post-distribution was conducted in five provinces in July to gather feedback from the beneficiaries on the operation interventions.</p> <p>The Project Management Board at national level has regularly monitored, inspected, supervised and updated the province's progress by phone and emails.</p> <p>The PDM in five provinces showed that activities took place sufficiently, followed the selection process of beneficiaries, logo, banners, and slogans as the requirement of the operation. In addition, all visited households were satisfied with the regulations and criteria on the selection of beneficiaries, the transparent and timely review by VNRC. The amount of funding household received was used to buy plant varieties (at the time of crop), fertilizers and some other expenses in the family.</p>		
Challenges		
Due to social distancing and travelling restriction measures, the inspection, supervision and evaluation after cash transfer was not able to be carried out properly and the number of interviewed households was low.		
Lessons Learned		
Provided local volunteers with survey tools and software in case of epidemics or difficulty in accessing the area. In future, VNRC will train and provide local Red Cross volunteers and staff with mobile applications to survey and collect evaluation information from project activities.		

Effective, credible and accountable IFRC		
Outcome 4.1: The IFRC enhances its effectiveness, credibility and accountability		
Output 4.1.3: Financial resources are safeguarded; quality financial and administrative support is provided contributing to efficient operations and ensuring effective use of assets; timely quality financial reporting to stakeholders		
Indicator:	Target	Actual
CCST Finance Department provides consistent support to the National Society to ensure quality to financial reporting	Yes	Yes
Output 4.1.4: Staff security is prioritized in all IFRC activities		
Indicator:	Target	Actual
IFRC Security focal point provides assistance and support to the operation	Yes	Yes
Narrative description of achievements		
The IFRC CCST Finance Manager and Support Service Manager have been in contact with VNRC Finance Manager and the operational team to provide them guidance on procurement and security.		

Challenges
No challenge has been reported during the operation as IFRC has managed to have a surge finance officer who has been employed under the COVID-19 operation, she could provide her technical support in finance reconciliation and reporting including the translation of the financial documents into English.
Lessons Learned
It is always worthy to have a local presence in the country to provide immediate support services to VNRC in particular financial reconciliation and reporting.

D. Financial Report

A total of CHF 303,325 was allocated to respond to the draught and saltwater intrusion in Vietnam. In all, the operation utilized CHF 240,978 (80 per cent of the allocation). The balance of CHF 62,347 will be returned to the DREF pool.

The major donors and partners of the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, German, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, as well as DG ECHO and Blizzard Entertainment, Mondelez International Foundation, and Fortive Corporation and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the national society, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions.

Please see the financial report [attached](#).

Contact information

Reference documents



Click here for:

- [Emergency Plan of Action \(EPoA\)](#)
- [Previous updates](#)

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

In Viet Nam Red Cross Society:

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For IFRC Resource Mobilization and Pledges support:

- Alice Ho, partnership in emergencies coordinator; email: PartnershipsEA.AP@ifrc.org

For Performance and Accountability support (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting enquiries)

- Liew Siew Hui, PMER manager; email: siewhui.liew@ifrc.org

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



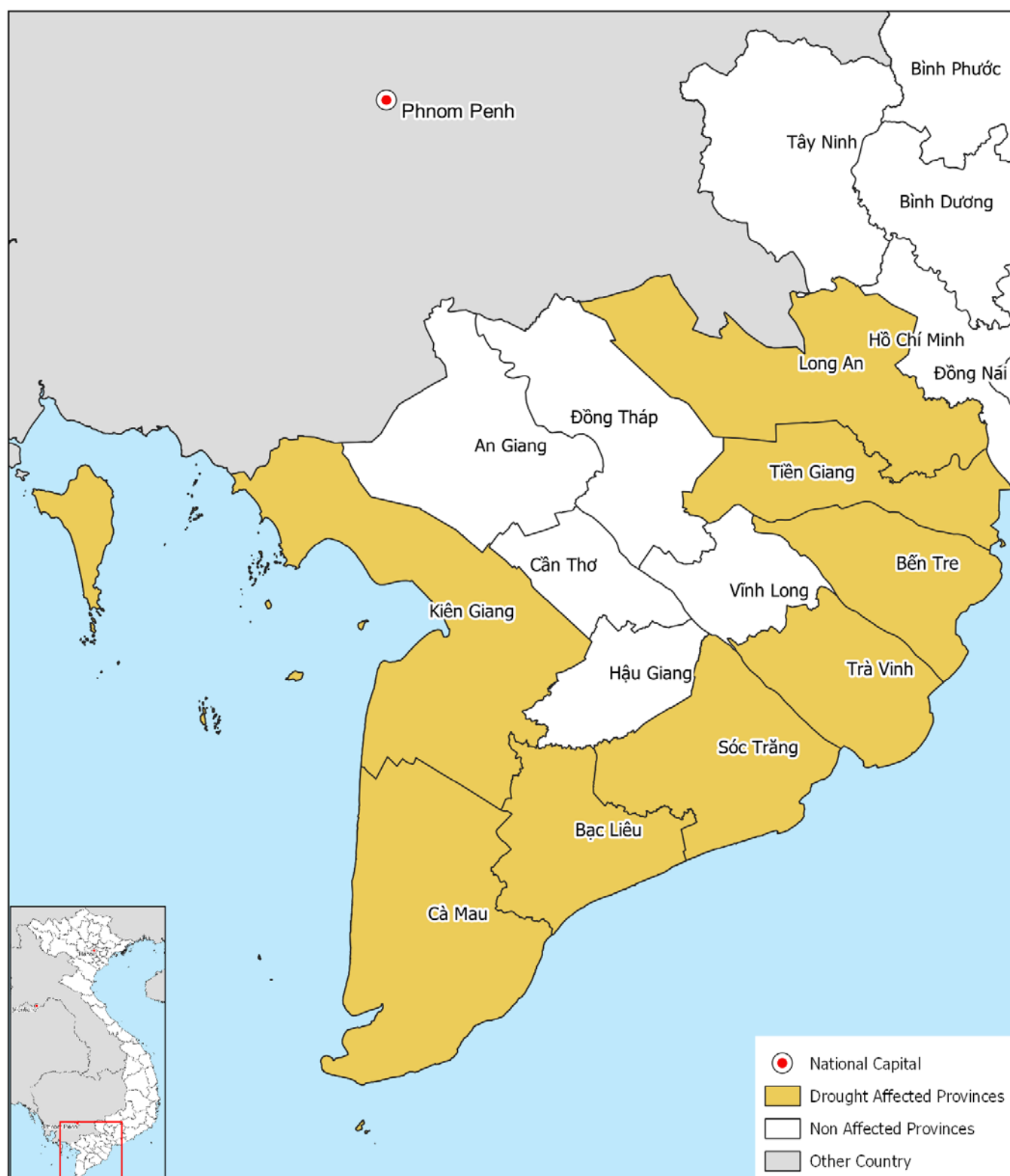
Promote **social inclusion**
and a culture of
non-violence and **peace**.

Map of Affected Provinces



Vietnam: Drought and saltwater intrusion Disaster Relief Emergency Fund

24 January 2020



The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of territory or its authorities. Map data sources: OCHA, OSM Contributors, ICRC, IFRC

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DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2020/1-9	Operation	MDRVN019
Budget Timeframe	2020	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 27/Oct/2020

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRVN019 - Vietnam - Drought and Saltwater Intrusion

Operating Timeframe: 31 Jan 2020 to 31 Jul 2020

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	303,325
DREF Allocations	303,325
Expenditure	-240,978
Closing Balance	62,347

II. Expenditure by area of focus / strategies for implementation

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction			0
AOF2 - Shelter			0
AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs	137,454	137,454	0
AOF4 - Health	40,182	36,104	4,079
AOF5 - Water, sanitation and hygiene	72,260	55,946	16,315
AOF6 - Protection, Gender & Inclusion			0
AOF7 - Migration			0
Area of focus Total	249,897	229,503	20,394
SFI1 - Strengthen National Societies	44,241	11,165	33,076
SFI2 - Effective international disaster management	2,594	310	2,284
SFI3 - Influence others as leading strategic partners	6,594		6,594
SFI4 - Ensure a strong IFRC			0
Strategy for implementation Total	53,428	11,475	41,953
Grand Total	303,325	240,978	62,347

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2020/1-9	Operation	MDRVN019
Budget Timeframe	2020	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 27/Oct/2020

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRVN019 - Vietnam - Drought and Saltwater Intrusion

Operating Timeframe: 31 Jan 2020 to 31 Jul 2020

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	168,538	168,538	0
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	52,530	52,530	0
Other Supplies & Services	1,266	1,266	0
Cash Disbursement	114,742	114,742	0
Logistics, Transport & Storage	14,536	7,515	7,021
Distribution & Monitoring	14,536	7,515	7,021
Personnel	27,366	3,971	23,395
National Society Staff	27,366	3,971	23,395
Workshops & Training	43,647	41,094	2,553
Workshops & Training	43,647	41,094	2,553
General Expenditure	30,726	5,153	25,572
Travel	3,122	977	2,144
Information & Public Relations	12,932	166	12,766
Office Costs	9,682	2,020	7,662
Communications	4,896	1,896	3,000
Financial Charges	94	94	0
Indirect Costs	18,513	14,708	3,805
Programme & Services Support Recover	18,513	14,708	3,805
Grand Total	303,325	240,978	62,347